



Daily News-Miner

THE VOICE OF INTERIOR ALASKA SINCE 1903

Inside Today Coghill recommends lawmakers drop lawsuit against Walker's Medicaid authority. » A4

Birch pollen count explodes, breaks record

By Amanda Bohman
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Laboratory technician Susan Harry knew the birch pollen count in Fairbanks was high. Her son suffers from allergies; all she had to do was look at his eyes.

But when she looked through her microscope Monday morning and began counting the pollen, she was a bit stunned.

"This has been the high-

est single count that we have had," she said.

Harry monitors the pollen counter located on the roof of the Tanana Valley Clinic on Noble Street and performs the necessary laboratory work to come up with a number, which doctors use for prescribing allergy remedies.

The birch pollen count for Monday was 4,290, breaking a record of 3,900 from two years ago.

People are suffering, said allergy doctor Tim Foote.

But he said relief is on the way in an expected rain storm that should dampen the pollen explosion.

"It will knock it down significantly," he said.

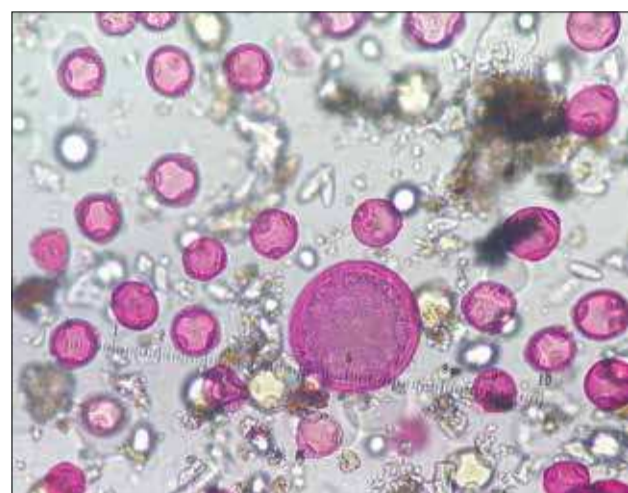
The surge of birch pollen has caused a run on allergy medication in Fairbanks.

"We got hit pretty hard," said Kevin Menninger, assistant grocery manager at Fred Meyer on the Old Steese Highway.

Nearby, Walgreens also

This microscope screenshot shows the density of pollen in Fairbanks on Monday, which was a record-setting day for the amount of pollen in the area. The small pink circles and small yellow and white circles are birch pollen. The large pink item is a piece of tamarack pollen.

SUSAN HARRY/
TANANA VALLEY CLINIC



POLLEN » A7

GOOD MORNING



The weather.

Cloudy. Numerous rain showers in the morning; then scattered rain showers in the afternoon. Highs in the lower to mid-50s.

High today52
Low tonight36

Sunrise: 5:08 a.m.
Sunset: 10:29 p.m.

WEATHER » A9

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INSURANCE DROP

Moda Health plans to no longer offer individual health policies in Alaska.

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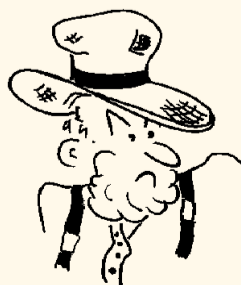
DOUBLE SIGNING

Glenn and Garrus Maiden sign NLI's with Mendocino.

SPORTS
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SOURDOUGH JACK:
"I just hope we don't get similar reports when mosquitoes start comin' round."



Spring cleaning overload



The Fairbanks North Star Borough Farmers Loop East transfer site sees constant activity Monday afternoon. ERIC ENGMAN/NEWS-MINER

Trash volumes cause delays at transfer sites

By Sam Friedman
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Some residents found closure signs when they took their garbage to some of the busiest Fairbanks transfer sites on Sunday.

Contractor Alaska Waste temporarily closed some sites to give crews more space to clear away large volumes of trash, said Bob Jordan, the Fairbanks North Star Borough solid waste and landfill manager.

"They were full to the point where until something goes out, there's not enough room for anything else to be put something back in," he said. "It's sort of like a

train. You have to let people off before you can let more people on."

Temporary closures have usually been 30 minutes to an hour, he said. There were closures at two of the most popular dumping grounds, the transfers sites at either end of Farmers Loop.

It's common this time of year for Dumpsters to fill up when everyone does spring cleaning at the same time. That's especially true when warm weather falls on a weekend, Jordan said.

The borough provides 14 transfer sites to give people outside the Fairbanks city limits a place to dump garbage for the borough landfill. Resi-



The Fairbanks North Star Borough Farmers Loop East transfer site sees constant activity Monday afternoon. ERIC ENGMAN/NEWS-MINER

dents inside the city have curbside residential garbage pickup service.

Residents dumped a total of 163.7 tons of refuse at the borough's transfer stations on Sun-

day, according to the total weight of the 32 transfer site loads taken to the landfill Sunday. That number may

TRASH » A7

Jury selection begins in Kangas murder case

By Dorothy Chomicz
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Jury selection began Monday in the trial of a Tanana man accused of killing two Alaska State Troopers two years ago.

Nathaniel Kangas, 22, allegedly shot Sgt. Scott Johnson and trooper Gabe Rich multiple times at close range while they were attempting to arrest his father, Arvin Kangas, at their Tanana home. The elder Kangas had threatened a village public safety officer.

Kangas is charged with two counts each of first- and second-degree murder, one count of third-degree assault and two counts of tampering with physical evidence.

The evidence-tampering

charges stem from audio recovered from personal recorders worn by the two troopers, which continued to record for hours after their deaths. Investigators listening to the recordings determined Johnson and Rich's weapons and holsters were manipulated after they were killed to make it appear as if they had drawn, or were about to draw, their weapons.

The recordings played a crucial role in the April 2015 trial of Arvin Kangas, who was found guilty by a Nanana jury of three counts of evidence tampering. He was sentenced to eight years in prison.

Prospective jurors gathered Monday morning in Superior



Kangas

Court Judge Paul Lyle's courtroom in Fairbanks and were asked if they had any reasons they should not serve on the jury. The jurors then left the room and those who answered yes to the question were called in individually to state their reasons.

District Attorney Gregory Olson said the potential jurors were questioned privately to avoid the possibility of their answers contaminating the jury pool.

Jury selection will resume today from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m., and Lyle said he hoped to question six jurors every hour. The final jury will consist of 12 jurors and two alternates.

The trial is expected to last three to four weeks.

Contact staff writer Dorothy Chomicz at 459-7582. Follow her on Twitter: @FDNMerime.

Criminal justice bill rolls up concerns and additions

By Matt Buxton
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The omnibus criminal justice reform bill finally reached the House floor Monday where it was greeted by what Speaker Mike Chenault called "a small tree" of proposed amendments.

Most of the proposed changes were small alterations to policy, but others were attempts to add bills wholesale to the legislation that raised further tree-inspired concerns about log-rolling and whether Senate Bill 91 was turning into a Christmas tree.

The bill was authored by Sen. John Coghill, R-North Pole, and is based on more than a year of work by the Alaska Criminal Justice Commission and other



Coghill

groups to reevaluate Alaska's increasingly expensive and ineffective criminal justice system.

Its chief aim is to reduce recidivism — the likelihood someone commits a new crime after being released from prison. Currently, nearly two-thirds of inmates will return to prison within three years.

It's the final remaining non-budget legislation still alive as the session stretches into the third week after the 90-day statutory deadline, and a target for bills that stalled in other committees.

Earlier in the session, Coghill said he was opposed to any add ons to the bill, feeling the bigger and more complicated the bill becomes the more difficult it is to gather the votes to get it passed.

Additionally, there's the chance the whole bill could be struck down in the courts for violating the Alaska constitution's rule that all legislation have a single subject.

That's the big concern for two amendments that would effectively shoehorn in other legislators' bills on the floor of the House.

One amendment, which was added on Monday,

BILL » A7

